



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Adult Education Directors
Federally Funded Grantees
Cooperating Eligible Entities

FROM: The Adult Education Unit
Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education

DATE: April 9, 2012

SUBJECT: Adult Education Operational Memorandum # 04-12

Happy spring!

This is a lengthy operational memorandum. It contains several critical pieces of information. Please read it carefully and discuss it with appropriate staff. If there are any questions, please contact your technical assistant.

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Grants and Applications

Program Improvement Project (PIP) Request for Proposals (RFP)

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) released an RFP to increase the capacity of Connecticut's adult education programs to provide the needed educational and support services in order to:

- increase accessibility to adult education programs and services for learners most in need;
- create a seamless transition to a post-secondary education and training system;
- build an educated and competitive Connecticut workforce; and
- foster strong, literate families in an effort to reduce the current student achievement gap.

Please visit <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2620&Q=320696> to download the RFP. Questions and answers from the bidder's conference held on March 16, 2012 can be downloaded at http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/adult/federal/PIP_Bidders_Conference_Questions.pdf. Proposals (one original and five copies), **REGARDLESS OF POSTMARK DATE**, must be received by 5:00 p.m. on **Friday, April 27, 2012**.

FY 2012-13 Adult Education Grant Application - Forms ED-244 and ED-244A

The FY 2012-13 Adult Education Grant Application, form ED-244 and the Supplemental Application for Adult Education Cooperating Eligible Entity (CEE), form ED-244A will be due to the Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education not later than **April 16, 2012**. Any new, amended or updated lease agreements should accompany the submission of the forms. Additionally, letters of commitment from private source contributors must accompany the submission of the ED-244A.

Remember:

- 1) Include the Excel Budget template with the submission of the ED-244 and ED-244A Applications. This Excel template will replace the Budget Form (ED-114) and the Budget Narrative pages found in the Word versions of the ED-244 and ED-244A Applications.
- 2) E-mail a copy of the Excel Budget template to valerie.marino@ct.gov. Be sure that the e-mail version includes the name of your district.

Assessment, Accountability and Data Management

CASAS eTests

The computerized delivery of CASAS assessments has been available through CASAS eTests for a few years. Several adult education programs in Connecticut utilize CASAS eTests to streamline the assessment process by reducing testing time for students and procuring test results immediately for decision-making purposes.

CASAS eTests are now available for delivery over the Internet. *eTests Online* is ideal for programs with no local servers and minimal local technical support. Individuals who currently administer CASAS paper-based tests can complete all the necessary training online. Programs new to computer-based testing are encouraged to begin with CASAS *eTests Online*.

The CSDE has negotiated a discounted rate with CASAS for the purchase of *eTests Online* test units for Connecticut's public adult education programs (\$1 per test unit, use product code: WTU-0001). To begin using CASAS eTests Online, please email Carol Farrell at CASAS at cfarrell@casas.org with a copy to Don Chao at dchao@crec.org.

If Internet access is a problem, then please note that CASAS eTests can also be delivered through a local installation. This does require server capacity and technical support at the local level. The discounted price per test unit for local installation of eTests for Connecticut's public adult education programs is \$0.85 per test unit (use product code CTU-0001). Carol Farrell at CASAS can also answer questions regarding this method.

Existing users of CASAS eTests have some options: (i) continue with the local installation; (ii) transition completely to eTests Online; or (iii) use the local installation for the main center and use eTests Online to reach out to satellite locations.

If there are any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Don Chao at dchao@crec.org or Ajit Gopalakrishnan at ajit.gopalakrishnan@ct.gov.

Connecticut Adult Reporting System (CARS)

CARS will be unavailable Saturday through Monday, April 14-16. After successfully moving the existing servers in December, the CSDE is now upgrading the CARS servers. We anticipate that CARS will be operational on Tuesday, April 17. If there are any questions, please contact Ajit Gopalakrishnan at ajit.gopalakrishnan@ct.gov.

GED Testing Service Starts Campaign against Fraudulent Websites

The GED Testing Service has filed a federal lawsuit to shut down a network of fraudulent websites that are unlawfully using the GED® trademark. These sites mislead adult learners and award false high school equivalency and GED® test credentials. GED Testing Service has developed a public relations campaign to inform test-takers, third-party organizations, members of the media, GED Administrators™ and state adult education directors about the lawsuit.

As part of the campaign, GED Testing Service has created the first online repository where educators and test-takers can report suspicious websites. Visit www.GEDtestingservice.com/fraud to learn more.

Official GED Practice Tests Available Online

The GED Testing Service has made available for online use some existing forms of the Official GED Practice Tests. These tests can be purchased online using a debit/credit card. The fee is \$10

for each subject area test. A link to this online practice testing Web site is available at <http://www.gedtestingservice.com/learninghub>.

The CSDE will continue to recommend that learners access GED practice testing, preparation services and other related educational services through local adult education programs. However, please know that some residents who do not wish to participate in public adult education programs may choose to avail themselves of these online practice tests.

New GED Assessment: Guide for Educators

In preparation for the new GED assessment for 2014, the GED Testing Service is developing a guide for educators. Four content area assessments – Literacy, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies – will measure a foundational core of knowledge and skills that are essential for college and career readiness. The assessment guide is intended to help adult educators better understand the content of the new assessment so that they can prepare learners for success.

Three chapters from this guide have been released to date:

- Chapter 1 discusses the variety of test items types (including new technology-enhanced items) that will be featured on the new assessment.
- Chapter 2 focuses on Webb's Depth of Knowledge model, assessment targets for all four content areas, and passage requirements and exemplars for the Literacy test.
- Chapter 3 discusses the development, scoring and reporting of short answer and extended response items.

These chapters are available at <http://www.gedtestingservice.com/assessment/index.html>. Please share them with all staff and encourage them to increase their understanding of the new assessment. The CSDE is planning for professional development around the new GED assessment during the 2012-13 school year.

Accountability Framework Discussion

At the Policy Forum in January, the CSDE proposed several adjustments to the existing accountability framework for adult education programs. Program directors interested in continuing the discussion with the CSDE are welcome to attend a session on Tuesday, May 1, 2012 from 9:00 – 11:00 at the Department of Education in Middletown. To confirm participation, please email gina.hoag@ct.gov by Monday, April 26, 2012.

Professional Development

Voter Education, Registration and Action (VERA)

Once again, Connecticut Adult Education will have the opportunity to become involved in the non-partisan Voter Education, Registration and Action (VERA) campaign this year in preparation for the November elections. Participating in the VERA campaign provides opportunities for teachers to include lessons and activities related to the elections and for

students to learn about the voting process and the benefits of citizenship. VERA is sponsored by World Education's New England Literacy Resource Center in the New England states.

Stay tuned for more information to be shared at the June Policy Forum. For further information, contact Maureen Wagner at maureen.wagner@ct.gov or 806-807-2102.

2012-13 Professional Development Application

The CSDE's Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, in partnership with ATDN is making funds available for the 2012-13 academic year for participation in specific professional development activities. All adult education providers receiving grant funds through the CSDE are eligible. Funds will be awarded for participation in the following areas:

- Student Achievement in Reading (STAR)
- Connecticut Adult Numeracy and Mathematics Institute
- English as a Second Language
- Disabilities
- Writing

Funds may be used to pay teacher and/or substitute time for professional development in the eligible areas and will be available on a first-come first-served basis. Applications will be emailed to directors by May 1, 2012 and will be due to CREC/ATDN by May 30, 2012.

20th Annual Conference on Serving Adults with Disabilities

This year's conference will be held on **Thursday, April 26, 2012 at the Marriott Hotel in Farmington**. The conference brochure and registration link may be accessed from the CREC Web site at www.crec.org. This year's conference features two keynote speakers and offers a variety of workshops. Providers of adult education programs and services will have the opportunity to discuss and learn current strategies and techniques addressing a broad spectrum of disabilities. All education providers should make every effort to participate in this event.

Differentiating Writing Instruction for ABE/GED Students

On May 18, 2012, from 9:30 to noon, the CSDE with ATDN will be hosting a session on Differentiating Writing Instruction for ABE/GED Students. This session will include a webinar that will offer: (i) strategies for differentiating writing instruction so that it is responsive to the needs and abilities of diverse ABE/GED learners; and (ii) suggestions to help encourage students to use pre-writing activities. The presenter, Mary Ann Corley, Ph.D., is a principal research analyst for the American Institutes for Research (AIR) in Washington, DC, where she directs the Teaching Excellence in Adult Literacy (TEAL) project that addresses elements of instructional excellence, with an emphasis on research-based writing.

Please register through Protraxx for this exciting, informative session. All participants should come to the CSDE in Middletown to view the Webinar, which will be followed by a rich discussion among the participants.

National External Diploma Program Council Conference (NEDPC)

As you prepare budgets for 2012-13, keep in mind that the NEDPC conference will be held in Providence, RI on October 14-16th. Registration will be \$195 and Hotel rooms will be \$129 a night. See you there!

Other Items

Mandated Reporter Model Policy

In response to Public Act 11-93 section 3(e), a model policy has been developed by the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF) in collaboration with the Connecticut State Department for use in public and private schools. The model policy can be accessed from the DCF Web site at www.ct.gov/dcf/cwp/view.asp?a=3483&Q=499860. This policy is intended only as a guide and school districts are being encouraged to tailor their own policy to meet their particular needs and goals. Adult education program providers are reminder to work with their districts regarding district policy and reporting procedures. DCF has developed a statewide training module and school districts are being asked to contact their DCF regional office to arrange for district-wide training.

Thank you.